"Don't get set into one form, adapt it and build your own, let it grow. Empty your mind, be formless, shapeless-like water. Now, you put water in a cup, it becomes the cup; you put water into a bottle it becomes the bottle; you put water into a teapot, it becomes the teapot. Now, water can flow or it can crash. Be water my friend."

Bruce Lee

Timeless words from a pioneer in the art of fighting. Martial arts superstar Bruce Lee, originally schooled in the "wing chun" style of kung fu, considered the word "style" to be a major flaw when it came to combat. So much so, that he started to develop his own way of fighting. Using a no style as a style theory, Lee set about getting rid of any wasted motions and set routines

within his repertoire, keeping what was necessary, he borrowed from other arts, such as judo, Karate and even western boxing. His new way of fighting would later be named Jeet Kune Do, which when translated means "the way of the intercepting fist." Bruce Lee's views and philosophies changed the way people thought about martial arts. His theories were later documented in his book. The Tao of Jeet Kune Do.

In its simplest form, boxing is a fight, a fight where your only weapon is your fists. The sweet science however, is far more complex than that. It has multiple styles and nuances within its art. Pure boxing, brawling, pressure fighting and inside fighting are just some of them. One method for boxing fans and experts, when predicting the outcome of fights, is by looking at what particular style an opponent employs. Certain styles usually trump other styles. Boxers do better against brawlers. Pressure fighters can sometimes get inside on boxers.

So what would happen then, if a fighter takes Bruce Lee's beliefs, and applies them to boxing? Showing no limitations when it comes to versatility and adaptability? The answer is Andre Ward.

Andre Ward is boxing's renaissance man. Like a sponge, he has soaked every one of boxing's technique's and strategies and mastered them all. His way of boxing encapsulates everything Bruce Lee stood for. Shortly before his death, Bruce Lee had an idea for a movie-The Game Of Death. The movie's finale was to involve Lee advancing up a chinese pagoda, encountering a different opponent with a different style on each of the five levels. The idea was that Lee would have to adapt to every fighter’s style, in order to defeat them. It was to be the platform where Bruce Lee was going to showcase his skills and new adaptable way of fighting to the world.

The Super Six tournament was Andre Ward's platform where HE showcased HIS skills and adaptable way of fighting to the world. Mikkel Kessler, Allan Green, Sakio Bika {a tune up fight which took place outside of the tournament}, Arthur Abraham and Carl Froch were the opponents, each with contrasting styles.

Level 1.

In his first fight, against Mikkel Kessler, the unfancied Andre Ward put on a dazzling display as he outboxed and outfought the pre tournament favourite. Kessler is a very good technician. A textbook fighter with a strong jab, Ward was able to take away Kessler's jab with his own jab and lead right hand. When Ward was on the back foot, Kessler could not get close as Ward’s superior hand and footspeed always kept Kessler one step behind. With Kessler badly cut, the fight went to the scorecards, where Ward won a technical decision.

Level 2.

In his second tournament fight, we got an early glimpse of Ward’s versatility as he took on a very different personna when completely dominating Allan Green over twelve, one-sided rounds. If in the first fight, Ward evoked memories of Ray Leonard with his movement and hand speed, this time Ward was more like that of Ray Leonard rival Roberto Duran, as he took away Green's left hook threat by smothering him against the ropes and turned in a fine display of

in-fighting that the Panamanian legend would have been proud of.

Level 3.
Because of injury to proposed opponent Andre Dirrell, Ward decided to test his skills against the tough Sakio Bika, in a contest that took place outside of the tournament. Bika, a practitioner of the more sour science of boxing, is a supremely strong durable super-middleweight. Early in the fight, Bika tried to turn things ugly. Ward, showing new layers yet again, matched Bika in the toughness department, which saw both fighters looking like two bulls locking horns. Ward decided to take the fight to the outside where he proceeded to out box Bika. Ward earned himself a unanimous decision and was now starting to gain recognition as one of the sport's premier fighters.

Level 4.
In his fourth showing, Ward demonstrated more variety, this time mixing up body attacks with laser accurate head shots. Abraham, a very hard puncher, was kept in his defensive shell for most of the encounter as Ward threw more in the way of combinations before claiming a wide unanimous decision. Ward was now in the Super Six final.

Level 5. Final Stage.
With Ward having now faced a textbook boxer, a left hook artist, a rough and tough brawler and a pressure fighter, it was now onto the style of the unknown. Carl Froch is a fighter who is difficult to label. He is neither boxer nor brawler. He throws punches from strange angles, has genuine ko power and is the owner of one of the best chins in boxing.
In a display befitting of his name, "Son Of God," Ward put on THE performance of his career, as he completely perplexed Carl Froch in twelve rounds of one sided fistic brilliance. Resembling Shang Tsung from the video game Mortal Kombat, Ward morphed through his many styles as he performed a boxing melody. Landing left hooks, straight right hands, boxing at range and in close, Andre Ward dominated Carl Froch in just about every aspect of boxing you can think of.

With the final level of the pagoda conquered, André Ward was now the Super Six tournament winner.

The question on everyone's mind regarding Ward is the same. Just who is out there that can beat him?

The answer at the moment? Nobody.

Lucian Bute seems to be the only fighter with a chance. But in reality, no matter what Bute brings to the table, Ward will be able to cater for it. His ability to adjust and adapt to whatever is in front of him is as good as just about any fighter I've seen. Even at this early stage in his career, there seems to be no weakness in Ward's game. He can box or brawl. He can fight at high pace or slow pace. He is a master in close or from the outside. He can fight going fowards, backwards, side to side and any other way you can think of. His understanding of timing and distance is as acute as anyone in the sport. He is almost impossible to time himself, because he fights using broken rhythm, as opposed to rhythm. Ask yourself this…How does a fighter train

for someone like Ward? What would be a fighter's strategy? Ward doesn't just take an opponents best asset away, he manages to take it and turn it into a disadvantage for them.

If one were to find faults with Ward, you could possibly say that he is too good for his own good. Ward is so dominant and his fights so one sided, sometimes you feel that it would be nice to see him go for the knockout. Ward's emphasis is WINNING, not entertaining and because of that, he has been wrongly labelled as boring. There are critics who don't seem to appreciate him. Personally, I feel his utter dominance over world class opposition, whilst alternating his look depending on the occasion, is anything but boring, but hey, each their own.

George Foreman once said, "Boxing is like jazz, the better it is, the less it is appreciated."

At 27 years-old, and seemingly getting better with each performance, i have a feeling Andre Ward, the most unbeatable fighter in boxing, will be underappreciated for a very long time.

Comment on this article

BHarper85 says:

Great article. I totally agree with it. I don't find Ward boring at all. He makes truly world-class fighters look silly. It'll be interesting to see if he starts knocking out more opponents in the future. Apparently Virgil Hunter said the ACL he tore in 2008 didn't completely finish healing until the weeks leading up to the Froch fight. That could've accounted for his lack of power. Regardless, I see him going years without losing because he seems committed and focused to his craft. Also, he seems humble enough to keep his ego in check and not underestimate an opponent. I'm a fan of him because he's great and has class...unlike someone else who is undefeated and who many consider to be unbeatable.

MisterLee says:

Ward is a beautiful infighter.

Radam G says:

Nice! And YUP! The SOG is likely the most unbeatable pugilist in da game today. And he is like water. Being formless and shapeless and can and will take out all types of forms. Beat 'em down or up, whichever one it takes. Holla!